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ABSTRACT

This document is the first of a projected series of reports that explores a statewide solution to the problems of work force quality in Texas. This initial report describes the current status of the Texas work force and introduces the concept of the Human Investment System as a means to improve that status by making human investment and people-serving programs and services more effective and more accessible. The Human Investment System is a user-friendly, resource efficient, outcome-based system designed to establish and implement comprehensive and integrated strategies that will weave the patchwork of existing federal, state, and local resources into an integrated network. The goals of the Human Investment System, which is characterized by multi-agency involvement, joint planning, and integrated service delivery, are to promote stable, functional, self-sufficient families and ultimately to produce an internationally competitive, world-class work force. This document describes the current status of the work force and workplace in Texas, institutional and individual barriers to success in an advanced, technology-based economy, and reasons why the Human Investment System as a forum for policy-making to overcome some of the barriers, should be implemented immediately. (LLL)

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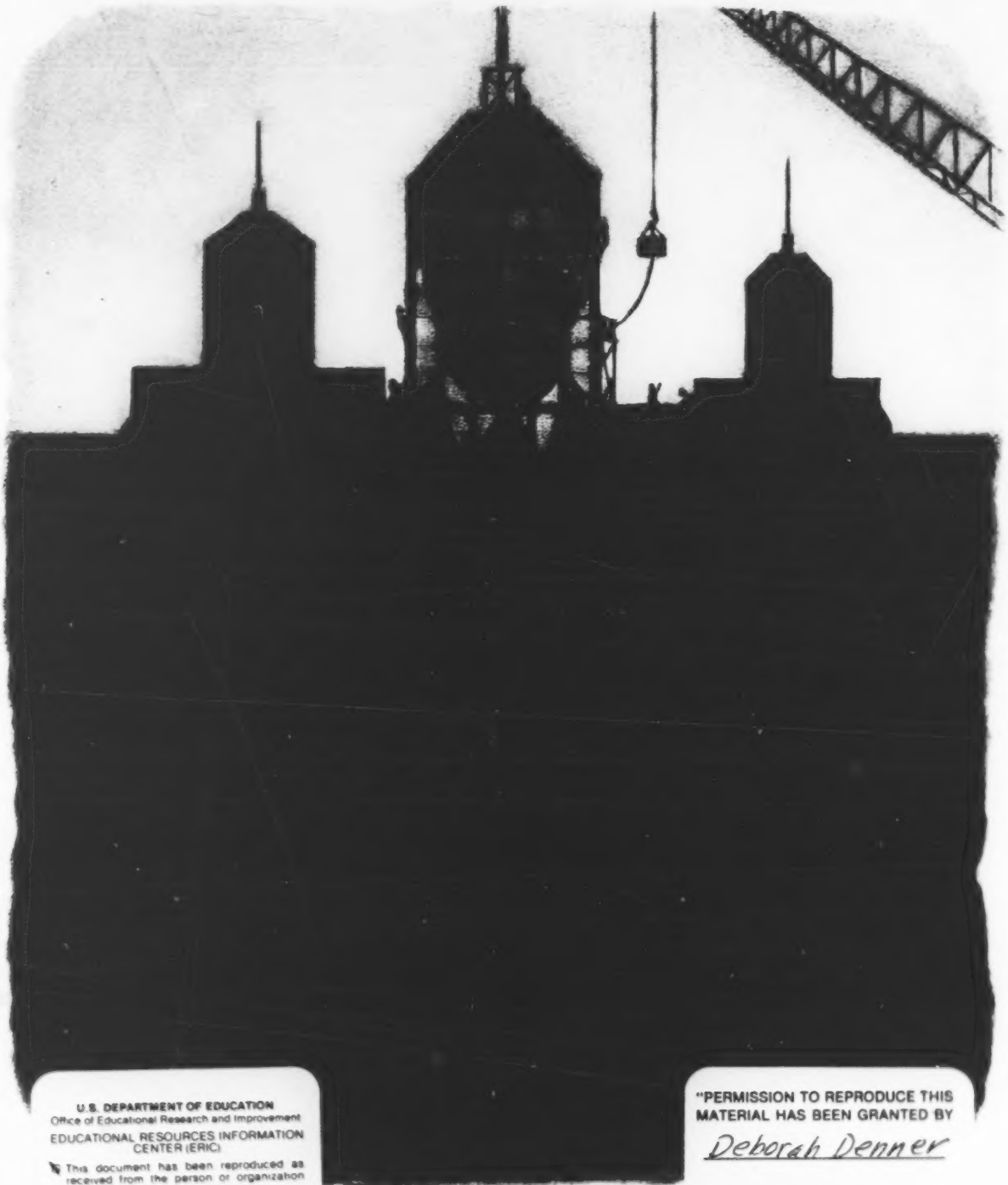
CREATING A HUMAN INVESTMENT SYSTEM IN TEXAS: A CALL TO ACTION



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The Texas State Job Training Coordinating Council is proposing an innovative approach to human resource development that will weave the patch work of existing programs and services into a seamless, integrated network.

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A letter to all Stakeholders in the future of Texas:

The future of Texas depends on our united ability to develop our human capital to remain competitive in an emerging global economy. In the global economic boom of the 1990's, human resources will be our most valuable asset and the key to maintaining a competitive edge. An investment in our human resources is an investment in the future security of all Texans. The Texas State Job Training Coordinating Council is taking a leadership role in proposing coordinated human investment strategies for implementation in Texas.

These strategies are collectively expressed by what the Council refers to as the Human Investment System. The concept of a Human Investment System characterized by multi-agency involvement, joint planning, and integrated service delivery is a powerful one. But powerful problems call for equally powerful solutions.

Texas is facing a work force quality crisis, partly caused by the inability of our institutions to meet the needs of our work force in a rapidly changing workplace. While we are making some progress, our systems for delivering education, employment, training, and human services are fragmented and lack policy cohesiveness. The systems lack uniform performance measures, are often duplicative, and encourage bureaucratic turf. The skills taught in education and training programs do not correlate as well as they should to existing jobs or the jobs of the future. Without new initiatives and sweeping changes, there can be no solutions. The decade of the nineties offers us a window of opportunity to work in partnership toward the common goal of investing in our human capital and regaining our competitive edge.

This document is a call to action to state leaders and any individual interested in being part of a statewide solution in making programs and services work better. Some of the ideas we are proposing are unprecedented, innovative, and challenging. As John Gruther put it, "Ours is a country deliberately founded on a good idea." Let's put our ideas to work for Texas.

Sincerely,

Glen Parkey, Chairman
State Job Training Coordinating Council

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In the emerging global economy, reaching our potential as a state will depend on how fully we develop our intellectual capital... the underpinning element of our competitiveness.

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From Patchwork To Network. The greatest challenge confronting Texas in the 1990's is how to build a quality and internationally competitive work force that will assure our place as a leader in the global market. The Texas State Job Training Coordinating Council (SJTCC), representing employment, education, training, and human resource development agencies, is proposing an innovative approach to human resource development that will weave the patchwork of existing programs and services into a seamless, integrated network. This will be accomplished through the creation of a Human Investment System as a vehicle for the leadership needed to unify multiple program goals into shared policy objectives under one larger purpose. Nothing like it has been tried in Texas. The Human Investment System is both a powerful strategic vision and an agent of change with a single bottom line goal: better management of existing resources that results in a world-class work force.

The greatest challenge confronting Texas in the 1990's is how to build a quality and internationally competitive work force that will assure our place as a leader in the global market.

Our institutions need to focus on outcomes that will result in independence and long term economic self-sufficiency for all Texans. For those at risk of not moving into the changing mainstream, the importance of excellence in programs and services targeted to their needs is heightened. It is widely recognized that a successful job and being able to compete for a better one represent the surest path to economic security for individuals and families.

Education and training are critical to this ability. However, people will not enter education and training programs unless their basic needs are met. By encom-

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passing the entire spectrum of fundamental needs, the design and implementation of the Human Investment System is a way to reorganize our approach to human resource development in the current social and economic environment. We cannot afford not to.

It is time for action. What we do about restructuring and reforming our education, training, employment, and human resource development systems in the next ten years will determine, to a large extent, our standard of living in Texas for much of the next century. The reason this has become so important has several well recognized facets. Technology is changing the workplace; and the work force is changing due to shifting social values and family structures. We must reposition ourselves and our institutions within these changes to remain competitive. Our success will depend on bipartisan political support, business leadership, and the risk-taking capacities of agency administrators. By defining a common theme for success, the Human Investment System will encourage the consensus building that is essential for creating shared ownership and lasting results.

The concept of a human investment system characterized by multi-agency involvement, joint planning, and integrated service delivery is a powerful one. But powerful problems call for equally powerful solutions.

The purpose of this document is to describe the current status of the work force and workplace; identify institutional and individual barriers to success in an advanced, technology-based economy; introduce the Human Investment System as a forum for policy-making to overcome some of the barriers; and explain why Human Investment System strategies should be implemented in Texas – beginning today. When considering the information presented here, it is important to remember that

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the problems we face indicate the necessity of taking up the challenge – when the temptation may be to lose heart. We must be realistic about the situation and understand that it will take a tremendous and unprecedented effort to bring about the needed changes. We must believe in ourselves and in our future. We must see struggle and failure not as reasons to doubt ourselves but as reasons to strengthen resolve. Perhaps an old proverb is appropriate: "Adversity is like a hammer; it shatters glass but forges steel." Those who give in or give up in the face of difficulties do not impact events. Our future will be shaped by our confidence in correcting the conditions that foster low achievement.

The Human Investment System is both a powerful strategic vision and an agent of change with a single bottom line goal: better management of existing resources that results in a world class work force.

Most of us do not get the opportunity to participate in something that is truly significant; something that will transform the future of an institution or history of a state. Creating a Human Investment System for Texas is a significant endeavor that will take time to fully evolve. Nevertheless, it is an idea whose time has come. But it will require strong gutsy leadership for implementation. It will demand statewide participation from statehouse, to courthouse, to city hall, to schoolhouse.

Texas has the people, talent, will, and expertise for greatness. What is missing is a unifying concept – a mechanism. The Human Investment System we are proposing is that mechanism. In music, the mechanism that harnesses talent and expertise into greatness is orchestration. When the symphony is warming up, before the conductor raises the baton, it may not sound like greatness. But the greatness is there waiting to be evoked. The Human Investment System mobilizes all the

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Texas businesses and industries are finding a deficit of qualified workers for today's jobs. Repeatedly, employers say that there are good jobs available but not enough qualified people to fill them.

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resources required to develop human beings into a well orchestrated endeavor having a common focus, commitment, and mission.

TEXAS IN THE 21st CENTURY. It is well known that in a world in which the demands of life and work are increasingly complex, we are facing a growing skills gap. The strength and economic health of our state and the well-being of our people depend upon closing this gap. No longer can we simply take advantage of abundant natural resources. Texas has entered a new era – an era of information, technology, and communication. In the new economic reality, our ability to compete nationally and globally depends on our ability to develop our most valuable strategic resource... our human capital. In the emerging global economy, reaching our potential as a state will depend on how fully we develop our intellectual capital... the underpinning element of our competitiveness. But a look at the class of 2001, which this year is in the first-grade, tells us how well our current human investment efforts are likely to pay off. In this classroom there are twenty-four students, and if this group reflects today's demographics: approximately five of the children live in poverty; six live in single parent families; five have no health insurance; two or three are socially maladjusted; two or three are emotionally disturbed; thirteen have working moms; and six to nine will drop out of school before graduation.

It is time for action. What we do about restructuring and reforming our education, training, employment, and human resource development systems in the next ten years will determine, to a large extent, our standard of living in Texas for much of the next century.

Today's children and families obviously have problems and these problems occur in clusters. In response, clusters of programs have been proliferated to solve them. Unfortunately, programs operate in relative isolation, often treating only one

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part of the problem. This disorganized and inadequate approach often results in failure and a waste of time and resources. To offset the emergence of a permanent underclass, living from one crisis to the next, we need a fundamental change in strategy. What we need is a system-wide transformation rather than incremental improvements to a few programs.

This is clearly illustrated by the comments of Jack Bowsher, former director of education at IBM, who has said, "if IBM were producing results comparable to those of our schools – that is, if 25% of their computers were falling off the assembly line before they reached the end,...the last thing in the world the company would do would be to run that same old assembly line an additional hour each day or an extra month each year. Instead, IBM would rethink the entire production process."

Our future will be shaped by our confidence in correcting the conditions that foster low achievement.

THE HIGH PRICE OF LOW SKILLS. The present work force quality crisis shows that we have reached the limits of our traditional models for education and human resource development. In employment and training, the focus has been on narrow-based technical skills training at the expense of developing broader skills and the capacity for lifelong learning and adaptation to change. Despite reform in education, the skills attained by graduates often do not match the skill requirements of the workplace. More seriously, 36% of all Texas adults over age 18 are high school dropouts. Dropout rates are especially high for minorities which represent the fastest growing segment of the Texas population, and therefore a larger percentage of the future work force. Approximately one-half of all Hispanic and one-third of all Black students fail to graduate. Many students do not attain basic literacy even if they do

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graduate. In Texas, it is estimated that 20%-30% of all adults have literacy deficiencies that undermine effectiveness in their personal lives and on the job.

It is well documented that there is a direct link between a state's economic prosperity and high school retention rates. It has been estimated that the cost of failing to educate and train young men and women for employment costs Americans $225 billion each year. These costs are reflected in lost productivity, in welfare payments, and in expenses related to the criminal justice system. Those who cannot make a living are more likely to "take a living". Crime and unemployment are expensive alternatives to training and education.

In order for economic reform to be successful in Texas, the issues of education, training/retraining, and worker preparedness must become a top priority of state leaders. The waste of resources due to inadequate education and training does not stop with education dollars lost. The resulting losses accumulate across the board because of lower productivity, higher supervisory costs, poor product quality, and ultimately reduction in market share– leading to business failure.

To offset the emergence of a permanent underclass, living from one crisis to the next, we need a fundamental change in strategy. What we need is a system-wide transformation rather than incremental improvements to a few programs.

NEW WORKPLACE REALITIES. Modern technology and international competition in the low-wage, unskilled labor market have eliminated most of the jobs that formerly absorbed our uneducated and unskilled into the work force. Those jobs, for the most part, will soon be extinct. In the 1950's and 1960's, our dropouts were able to drop into decent paying jobs that enabled them to become self-sufficient and even own a home. But today there are few jobs available for dropouts. Jobs and the demographics of the work force are both

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changing. New and emerging jobs, as well as current ones, will require significantly higher levels of training and stronger basic skills. While most jobs will not demand a college degree, they will require some education beyond high school. Forty-one percent of the jobs in the year 2000 will be in higher skilled occupations - compared with twenty-four percent in 1984. Even now Texas businesses and industries are finding a deficit of qualified workers for today's jobs. Repeatedly, employers say that there are good jobs available but not enough qualified people to fill them. However, job growth by itself does not help the hard-core poor; it does not turn low-skilled workers into high tech competitors.

It has been estimated that the cost of failing to educate and train young men and women for employment costs Americans $225 billion a year. These costs are reflected in lost productivity, in welfare payments, and in expenses related to the criminal justice system.

Others have recognized the problem. In its report to the 71st Texas Legislature, the Strategic Economic Policy Commission recognized deficiencies in the Texas work force as a serious barrier to the future growth of the Texas economy. With the 12th largest economy in the world, Texas must anticipate what jobs and skills are critical for the maintenance and expansion of our economy. Changes in family structure, high dropout rates, and a fragmented education and training system account for a poorly prepared Texas work force. A high quality work force is critical to the survival and future growth of the Texas economy. The connection between education and prosperity has never been more apparent.

We cannot have a world-class economy without a world-class work force. We cannot have a world-class work force without a world-class education system. We cannot have a world-class education system unless we create a world-class mecha-

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nism for delivery of the entire package of human services.

A COMMON AGENDA FOR TEXAS. The State Job Training Coordinating Council and state agency leaders are already taking a pro-active stance in the creation of a unified agenda for meeting today's challenges. The SJTCC Chair introduced the concept of an integrated human investment system at the May, 1989 Council meeting. The 71st Legislature of the State of Texas passed a concurrent resolution on June 6, 1990, recognizing the Human Investment System as a means of building a quality work force. The resolution instructs the State Job Training Coordinating Council and the Texas Health and Human Services Coordinating Council to initiate the Human Investment System, and directs education, employment, training, and human service agencies to participate in addressing its goals.

The 71st Legislature of the State of Texas passed a concurrent resolution on June 6, 1990, recognizing the Human Investment System as a means of building a quality work force.

Resources for human development programs are limited, therefore it is crucial to recognize that no one system can be effective alone. There are seventeen autonomous state agencies in Texas which provide education, training, employment, health, and human services, each with their own board and commission. There are more than 1,000 independent school districts, a myriad of alternative education and training programs, and a wide array of community colleges and universities throughout the state. There are also a multitude of both public and private health and human service programs in Texas. Though functionally decentralized, this patchwork of service providers must agree that better integration of existing resources is the key to better services for common clients. The Human Investment System would stimulate better

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As it operates today, individuals in need of assistance cannot get all the information they need at one place. A complete list of programs and services is rarely available at one agency.

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collaboration and linkages among education, employment, job training, and human service programs in Texas.

Any meaningful strategy for developing a quality work force and ensuring a closer match between skills being taught and those in demand must involve the private sector. Private employers are already involved. The Texas Chamber of Commerce organized a statewide Education Task Force which took a look at the work force issue. In *An Internationally Competitive Work Force for Texas by the Year 2000*, its August, 1989, report, the task force called for a coalition of business and education leaders to work with educators and service providers to improve the "socioeconomic infrastructure of the low-income citizen" as a way to bring the at-risk population into the mainstream. As the State Job Training Coordinating Council exemplifies public-private partnership in action, the SJTCC, along with other advisory groups such as the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council, the Texas Literacy Council, the Texas Council on Vocational and Technical Education, and others, is poised to initiate a Human Investment System linking private enterprise, leadership, and expertise with public programs and resources.

Changes in family structure, high dropout rates, and a fragmented education and training system account for a poorly prepared Texas work force.

The vision of a Human Investment System will bring all our efforts together since its primary mission is singular: better utilization of existing resources resulting in a world-class work force and the opportunity for all Texans to participate in the economic mainstream. A system that unites disjointed efforts and resources into a cohesive, integrated whole will enable us, at the minimum, to focus our resources on

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individual and family self-sufficiency. To bring about real change in the preparation of our work force, the Human Investment System shifts the focus from how do we get there to what do we want? We know that we want to foster conditions that will allow lasting growth and positive change for individuals and families. We know that we want a quality work force. As a State, we want to be healthier, wealthier, and wiser. This begins with the development of each individual. By keeping the vision focused on this simple bottom line goal, management strategies to implement the system become self-evident.

Resources for human development programs are limited, therefore it is crucial to recognize that no one system can be effective alone. This patchwork of service providers must agree that better integration of existing resources is the key to better services for common clients.

HUMAN INVESTMENT SYSTEM DESIGN. A fundamentally different approach to providing services cannot succeed on just a vision or an ideal. We need the means to make a significant difference in how people access and receive services. What we must have are "tools" to effect change and get better results from our programs and institutions. The critical tools for building a multi-agency, single-purpose Human Investment System include integrated planning, an integrated intake/assessment eligibility system, integrated data systems, integrated evaluation, and integrated management. Using these tools, the following design criteria are essential as the building blocks for success:

- Accessible and User-Friendly –To improve customer access to services, the system should be designed to cut through the patchwork of programs, conflicting eligibility requirements, and multitude of different forms and applications. Adoption of a common intake application, using a shared data base, would make it easier for an

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applicant to access the system from any one of a number of agencies and service providers. A one-stop shopping approach would enable any service provider in the system to certify eligibility and provide a list of services available to qualified participants at any agency in this new network. A computerized interagency data base, coupled with a universal participant access card which is usable across programs, would eliminate much of the unnecessary duplication that results in inefficiency and frustration.

• Demand Driven – Here lies the cutting edge of the public-private partnership where human services and the economy meet. Producing shoddy goods for a saturated market does not work in the global marketplace. The same principle holds true for the development of human capital. The system for creating a world-class work force must be driven by market forces rather than forced by market crises. In the Human Investment System, the customers are both employers seeking qualified workers and workers seeking quality education, training, and health and human services. Effective public policy must be responsive to these dual customer demands. Government programs should provide goods and services in response to the needs of individuals and employers.

The vision of a Human Investment System will bring all our efforts together since its primary mission is singular: better utilization of existing resources resulting in a world class workforce and the opportunity for all Texans to participate in the economic mainstream.

• Accountability Based on Outcomes – To have the desired impact, program success should be measured in terms of quantifiable socioeconomic and educational gains. Achievement standards would be established through coordinated planning and interagency plan review to ensure accountability for shared outcomes. If we are serious about having strong, independent

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families, the acquired ability of a family to be self-sufficient would be the ideal measure of success. While not forgetting that success will be contingent upon first having met the basic needs for health, food, and shelter; setting high standards for increased skills and employment, earned income, and reduced welfare would enhance program credibility and give real meaning to performance. Using outcomes as measures of quality control and basing payments to service providers upon performance would invigorate programs, introduce leverage for results, and make the system accountable to its customers.

A computerized interagency data base, coupled with a universal participant access card which is usable across programs, would eliminate much of the unnecessary duplication that results in inefficiency and frustration.

• Policy Responsive and Resource Efficient – A single policy focus which subsumes all the discrete policies and missions of separate programs would unify and therefore strengthen the impact of public policy in Texas. Reducing unnecessary duplication and increasing efficiency would be logical outcomes of a coherent interagency policy base. But greater efficiency is not necessarily cheaper. Policy responsive to today's work force has to recognize the greater needs of the hard-to-serve participant. There are extra costs associated with quality; therefore, incentives to enroll the hard-to-serve must be counted on and built in.

Functioning as a sort of "consumer's guide," a Human Investment System having these design criteria would make it much easier for a person seeking services to get information, receive help, and gain independence. As it operates today, individuals in need of assistance cannot get all the information they need at one place. A complete list of programs and services is rarely available at one agency. The

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search for services often entails being bounced around between six to ten locations, and at each stop filling out another application, undergoing another assessment, or going through another eligibility determination. Daunted by the complexity, confusion, and dehumanization of their search, people who could become self-sufficient with intervention often give up.

By putting a Human Investment System in place, Texas will accomplish both short term and long term goals. In the short term, the immediate effect is to offset the impact of unemployment by enabling people to receive services while participating in a training program. A more long term effect is that of helping solve one of the fundamental causes of unemployment in the first place – lack of education and basic skills. Coupled with job creation, these efforts, if sustained, can help reverse economic decline.

Texas must make a commitment at the highest level to ensure that each individual has access to skills and knowledge necessary for the opportunity to succeed.

Conclusion - Closing The Gap. None of the initiatives previously described can be adequately realized by any one sector alone. As implementation efforts are developed, each sector needs to respond to its own set of challenges. Texas must make a commitment at the highest levels to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to obtain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. State leaders must now begin to create a seamless system for the delivery of education, training, employment, and human services.

The dream of a high school diploma for every child is one that can come true. At one time universal polio vaccinations seemed farfetched. Now every child in America gets them. The hope of every adult having either a job, a training program,

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In the words of Hillel, "If I don't do it, who will? If I don't do it now, when will I? If I do it only for myself, who am I?"

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or a college to attend is one that can be realized. A society that can develop the technology to put millions of bits of information on a silicone wafer the size of a fingernail can surely produce a foundation of education and opportunity for all its citizens. The most stable and prosperous societies – the ones where we all want to live and where business and industry can thrive– are built on the integrity and productivity of individuals.

An infrastructure of programs that serves each Texan is what the State Council wants to bolster through creation of the Human Investment System. A coalition of state leaders representing all the stakeholders in Texas's future is crucial to success. A shared passion for a high quality of life for all Texans can only inspire teamwork. But the strength of a team lies in the commitment and dedication of each individual on it.

A coalition of state leaders representing all the stakeholders in Texas's future is crucial to success. A shared passion for a high quality of life for all Texans can only inspire teamwork. But the strength of a team lies in the commitment and dedication of each individual on it.

It is time to close the skills gap and open the gates of opportunity to all Texans. This will require converting our patchwork of programs into a seamless network. The State Council extends the work force quality challenge to all stakeholders. In the words of Hillel, "If I don't do it, who will? If I don't do it now, when will I? If I do it only for myself, who am I?"

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